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REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Geneva, 21-22 July 1999

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INTRODUCTION

1. In 1997, the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/187 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2001. In resolution 53/182, it designated the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as the Secretary-General of the Conference and requested him to make all necessary preparations for the Conference.

2. As part of that preparatory process, a Consultative Forum was established by the Secretary-General of the Conference, comprising representatives of the United Nations system and other international organizations, member States and the private sector. Its first meeting was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 21 to 22 July 1999. The meeting was opened by Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD and of the Conference, and chaired by Mrs. Anna K. Tibaijuka, UNCTAD Special Coordinator for LDCs and Executive Secretary of the Conference. The meeting had before it a note prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat entitled "Preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries" *(UNCLDC/III/1)*.

I. OPENING STATEMENTS

3. Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD and of the Third LDC Conference, said that the main functions of the Forum were to provide an opportunity for the least developed countries (LDCs), their development partners, United Nations agencies, civil society and the business community to exchange views on the conceptual framework of the Conference, its objectives and organizational aspects and on the intergovernmental preparatory process. He noted that inter-agency consultations and coordination, together with meetings of intergovernmental preparatory committees and expert groups, had played an important role in ensuring the successful preparation for the first and second United Nations Conferences on LDCs. Looking back, however, it would appear that the preparatory process for both previous Conferences had not involved all the potential stakeholders in a manner that would have enabled them to have a sense of direct ownership of the Programmes of Action adopted by the Conferences. That might have been one of the reasons accounting for the feeble follow-up process at various levels. In order to improve on this, therefore, the full involvement of all relevant actors in their own respective areas of competence and comparative advantages should be ensured from the outset. The Forum represented an important way of contributing to this objective. A wide spectrum of actors ought to be given an opportunity to acquire a sense of involvement in the preparatory process and the final outcome and to commit themselves to carry out their respective responsibilities arising from the Conference.

4. The substantive agenda for the Conference was broad, since the Conference concerned the overall sustainable socio-economic development of LDCs. In order to make progress, however, it was advisable to identify critical areas and set priorities, and not to attempt to solve all the problems at once. Efforts and resources should be directed at solving the most critical development bottlenecks first. In this regard, the Conference secretariat would rely heavily on the Forum□s advice in setting the right priorities and perspectives and in ensuring the maximum mobilization worldwide on behalf of LDCs. The situation of some LDCs was made particularly

difficult by what Mr. Ricupero called the most perverse combinations of economic regression; the virtual disappearance of the State; civil war; violence; massive violations of human rights; and in some cases, even genocide.

5. While underdevelopment was the common element in all LDCs, each country still had its own national peculiarities, potential and opportunities. To be meaningful and effective, a global programme of action needed to be based on country-level assessments of constraints, priorities and opportunities. For this reason, the Conference should include a comprehensive and extensive preparatory process at country level which should involve interministerial departments, civil society organizations, the private sector and local government representatives. An open and participatory preparation at country level would lead to the formulation of a relevant and legitimate national-level comprehensive programme of action for each country. This would become the basis for formulating an umbrella global programme of action, to be agreed upon at the Conference. The Conference secretariat was seeking suggestions on the best way to organize these country-based activities from other Forum participants, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, which had field representation and experience in dialogue with development partners.

6. One of the reasons why the previous programmes of action had had limited success was that they were not accompanied by sufficiently specific resource commitments. Thus, the securing of resources for the implementation of the new comprehensive programme of action to be agreed on at the Conference was the major challenge. New approaches for mobilizing development finance needed to be found, along with ways in which the present debt liability could be turned into an asset.

7. Mr. Ricupero invited the Forum to be innovative and daring in considering all the issues before it and assured participants of his personal engagement and commitment to this process.

8. Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Secretary of the Conference and Chairperson of the Forum, introduced the note prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat (UNCLDC/III/1) on the preparatory process for the Conference. She stated that some of the steps and activities in that preparatory process were mandated by the General Assembly and that it might be difficult to depart from them. On the other hand, there was more flexibility as to some of the other arrangements and as to the substantive content and focus of the Conference. The secretariat would rely on the collective views of all stakeholders in the process, and that was where the Forum could make an important contribution.

II. GENERAL DEBATE

9. The representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, said that the European Union was fully committed to the least developed countries and stood ready to make the necessary efforts to contribute not only to the logistical organization of the Conference but to its substantive agenda as well. The EU intended to participate fully in the debate to formulate

new strategies and an action plan for the sustainable development of the LDCs for the years up to 2010. The Union and its member States were among the first donors of official development assistance (ODA) and would continue to be active in that field, despite budgetary constraints. In addition, the EU market was very open to exports from LDCs, the majority of which were signatories of the Lomé Convention and benefited from free access to the EU market for their exports, and also comprised the main market for their exports.

10. It was important to identify critical areas and set priorities for the Conference. That task should be based on a thorough analysis of past experience, so that the Conference could deal with critical issues in a way that would make a true difference for LDCs. The European Union appreciated the integrated approach reflected in the secretariat paper of linking the future programme of action with resources to implement it. The secretariat's proposals for the preparatory process were interesting and needed to be further discussed. The Forum should consider the projected achievements of the Conference in an informal and creative manner, and in particular, the strategic issues on which the preparatory process should focus. He also emphasized the importance of considering how to create a dynamic preparatory process and how both LDCs and donor countries could be fully involved in a true partnership.

11. The representative of Bangladesh, speaking also in his capacity as Coordinator of the Least Developed Countries, emphasized the important role the Forum could play in supporting the preparatory process for the Conference, a process whose success the LDCs were fully committed to ensuring. On several occasions the LDCs had expressed disappointment over the modest outcome of past commitments, essentially because of lack of resources. It was therefore important for the Third Conference not to be seen as just another event; it should instead result in feasible, tangible, measurable and action-oriented commitments. It should integrate the outcomes of the Third WTO Ministerial Conference, UNCTAD X, the Millennium Assembly, and the South Summit. While focusing on critical areas, the agenda of the Conference should remain open. The Comprehensive New Plan of Action for Integrating LDCs into the Global Economy adopted in June 1999 by LDCs in Sun City, South Africa, reflected the serious efforts under way. The plethora of programmes of actions and initiatives in favour of LDCs meant that their development partners needed to have a single focused vision which would help LDCs to unlock their development constraints and enhance their insertion into the global economy.

12. The representative of Belgium expressed his country's appreciation for the choice of Brussels as the venue for the Third LDC Conference and assured the EU and UNCTAD of Belgium's full support in all practical and organizational matters. The big challenge facing the preparatory process was to convince all stakeholders that there would not be a succession of bold statements followed by a return to business as usual. If LDCs' development was really a priority for the world community, then strong and decisive action was the only possible answer. A renewed commitment, which might reasonably be expected as an outcome of the Third Conference, was more likely to have concrete effects if based on pragmatic and measurable objectives. In that respect he welcomed the idea of preparing country-specific programmes of action and emphasized the importance of establishing effective delivery mechanisms. Without ignoring the importance of financing for development, the Conference should not reduce the predicament of the LDCs to the single problem of lack of financial resources. Closely interlinked with the issue of resources were policies. Additional donor funding would be easier to attract if it was supplementary to national efforts. LDCs, however meagre their domestic

resources, could show the right way by giving priority to investment and development, good governance, respect for basic human rights and poverty reduction. He welcomed the intention to involve all stakeholders in the preparatory process, which would ensure a sense of ownership and commitment to carrying out responsibilities arising from the Conference.

13. The representative of the European Commission outlined the advantages of hosting the Third Conference on LDCs in Brussels. With more than 800 journalists worldwide accredited to the European institutions, the "Capital of Europe" could provide excellent coverage of the Conference, which would in turn contribute to increasing global awareness of the vulnerabilities and problems facing the LDCs. The appealing proximity of Belgium's neighbour, France, as the organizer of the two previous Conferences and a member of the EU, was highlighted. The objective was to organize the Conference to attain practical and operational outcomes that could be effectively followed up at the global, regional, national and sectoral levels. In line with the global spirit of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the substantive agenda of the Conference should include a discussion on the need for developing countries, and particularly the least developed ones, to secure a share in the growth of international trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development. Agreeing with the thrust of the June 1999 Sun City meeting that the LDCs must prepare their position in view of the Third WTO Ministerial Conference, he referred to the changes that had taken place since the adoption in Paris of the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the 1990s, especially the realities of the new multilateral trading system. The upcoming Conference should take this new scenario into account and focus on the development of LDC export capacities in goods and services, because the simple elimination of barriers and the improvement of access to developed markets was not sufficient. Donors should take into consideration the progress made on their cooperation in the context of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and of the World Bank□s Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), and the evolution of foreign debt initiatives in favour of highly indebted poor countries. The ideas put forward at the Third LDC Conference should be reconciled with the best practice of international donors and with the conclusions, recommendations and action plans of recent United Nations world conferences (including those on environment and development, population and development, women, and human rights) and their respective evaluation exercises five years later. European Commission delegations in the LDCs were willing to help with country-level preparations.

14. The representative of Sweden recalled his country's strong and long-standing commitment to the cause of LDCs and multilateral cooperation. Sweden would therefore contribute actively to the preparatory process for the Conference and to the Conference itself. He emphasized the importance of focusing on poor people in LDCs. Actions and options to be considered should be those which had the most direct impact on poor people. The Third Conference on LDCs, which would follow a number of important global events, would have to be a new kind of conference, resulting in a tangible, measurable and action-oriented outcome. He emphasized the importance of involving all the actors in the preparatory process and in the Conference itself.

15. The representative of the WTO said that the marginalization of LDCs reflected an unacceptable social and economic situation; without urgent action on their behalf, that marginalization would increase further. By the time the Conference took place, therefore, it

would be necessary to show that something concrete and effective was being done to change the situation and create conditions for durable and sustainable development in the LDCs. Producing favourable trade conditions was one essential aspect of these efforts. He recalled the proposal made by the former Director-General of WTO in 1996 to seek bound, duty-free access for all products imported from LDCs. This had borne some fruit, but in a limited manner only. Much more needed to be done. Generalized system of preferences (GSP) treatment lacked the stability of a binding commitment, and many sensitive products were excluded. The LDCs as a whole accounted for less than 0.05 per cent of international exports. They therefore represented a threat to no one, and there should be no reason for holding back on that initiative. While the market access initiative sought to create stable and liberal demand conditions for exports, the integrated framework for trade-related technical assistance adopted by the 1997 WTO high-level meeting on LDCs sought to help the supply response by easing capacity constraints and providing assistance at the country level which could promote trade-related growth and development. Many WTO members had flagged the issue of trading conditions for LDCs as being achievable at the Seattle Ministerial Conference. If that actually happened, it would give a boost to LDCs' trade potential and make an important contribution to pulling the LDCs out of the downward spiral in which they had been caught.

16. The representative of UNDP saw the Conference as a unique opportunity to galvanize the international community around the problems facing the LDCs and to build a partnership between donors and LDCs in order to reverse the increasing marginalization of the latter during the past two decades. UNDP endorsed the secretariat□s approach of focusing on concrete programmatic work at the country level and stressed the bottom-up approach, which ensured that the programme of action to be presented to the Conference would be deeply rooted in the realities and priorities of the LDCs. He further welcomed the initiative of involving all stakeholders, including Governments, the business community and civil society. The Conference should be a time to look ahead in order to develop a national vision of development around which the different social groups could build a consensus. UNDP allocated 85 per cent of its core resources to poor countries, including the LDCs. He conveyed his organization's commitment to assist in the country-level preparations and in setting up round tables. The Comprehensive Plan of Action endorsed at Sun City was a pertinent example of what could be done in the preparatory process. UNDP continued to believe that the issue of governance was essential for LDCs and for their growth.

17. The representative of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) said that, although great strides had been made in the past few years by the United Nations and by the ICC in establishing a closer working relationship, scepticism seemed to linger as to the real contribution business could make to the type of activities covered by the Conference. The ICC supported the general approach of the Forum, aimed at results that were tangible, feasible and measurable. It was working closely with UNCTAD on development issues, particularly in African LDCs, by helping to prepare investment guides in collaboration with the national chambers of commerce that would strengthen local businesses and educate service facilitators. The idea was to bring the LDCs closer to both the development process and the multilateral process.

18. The representative of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) stated that all actors should address the problems of the LDCs on the basis of past achievements or lack thereof, as

that could be a decisive factor as to what plan of action should be adopted for the next 10 years. A case study should be undertaken of developed countries and the reasons for their failure to meet their commitments.

19. The Coordinator of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service said that the upcoming Conference presented a great opportunity to integrate civil society as a key stakeholder in the preparatory process. As regarded the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the process, in addition to NGOs from the North, appropriate NGOs from the South, and LDCs themselves, should make their presence felt and could serve as focal points to disseminate information.

III. CONCLUSIONS

A. Preparatory process

20. The Meeting discussed the various aspects and steps of the preparatory process, as outlined in the secretariat note (UNCLDC/III/1) and as presented by the Executive Secretary of the Conference. The main conclusions follow.

21. On general matters, participants unanimously supported the emphasis on the country-based bottom-up approach. LDC Governments should have the central role. The involvement of members of civil society, including the private sector and NGOs, was essential, at both the international and country levels. It was also important to assess why previous LDC conferences had not been as successful as expected. What actions should have been taken by the LDCs and by donors, and why? The outcome of the Conference should be feasible, tangible, measurable and action-oriented.

Consultative Forum

22. Besides Bangladesh, as Coordinator of the LDCs, other LDC representatives would be invited to present more first-hand experiences, with the exact details to be agreed after consultation with the LDC group. The DAC should be invited to the Forum. Participation of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the LDCs (OSCAL) was confirmed. Participation of NGOs, including the NGO liaison committee in Brussels and NGOs from the South, was envisaged, with more consultation to take place on this matter. The ICC would represent the private sector, but a separate meeting with a broader private sector group was planned.

23. Participants felt that, to the extent possible, Forum meetings should operate on the principle of informal exchanges and brainstorming, rather than on the delivery of prepared statements. Reports on Forum meetings should be widely circulated. The date and venue for the next meeting was left to the Chair.

Consultation with civil society

24. The business sector and civil society, including NGOs from the South and academia, had an important role to play in the country-level preparations as well as in the Forum and other international preparatory activities. At the Conference itself, in view of the large number of potential participants and given the intergovernmental nature of the event, the participation of members of civil society and the business sector would be more effectively organized outside the main Conference, and in parallel with it. NGO participation from the South should be specifically encouraged.

Advocacy and promotion

25. The Secretary-General of the United Nations should invite former President Mandela to act as Goodwill Ambassador. The meeting welcomed the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in raising LDC issues in major forums and recommended that she continue her efforts, particularly by addressing the Group of Eight meetings. Other eminent persons (e.g. Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, George Soros) should also be approached to give support. Youth and business events, concerts and the like should be envisaged. The press corps covering the EU in Brussels should be fully utilized. A communications strategy should be developed in consultation with the Department of Public Information (DPI).

Country-level preparations

26. The EU and UNDP indicated their willingness to assist Governments in the preparatory process. It was hoped that other entities with field presence, and in particular the World Bank, would also provide assistance. The involvement of civil society, including the private sector, NGOs and academia, was important. Obtaining a fully participatory process in certain LDCs where democratic institutions were not well developed would be problematic. Although LDC Governments should have the final say, they might need to be briefed and motivated to do country-level preparations; pre-commitments by donors would provide encouragement. The secretariat should make available to LDCs guidelines on the structure and format of a typical national programme of action. Two or three national programmes should be undertaken at an early stage. Each LDC would be free to identify its own constraints and opportunities within the guidelines, state its own priorities and options, and explain its own vision and policies.

27. The national programmes would be different from the documentation presented at the UNDP round tables or World Bank consultative groups, in that they would cover a period of 10 years. These national 10-year programmes should make full use of available national long-term strategies or Vision 2020 statements. These broader perspectives could guide subsequent meetings of the round tables and consultative groups, which have a shorter horizon.

28. On the country-specific round tables and extraordinary round table meetings (EORTs) envisaged in paragraph 32 of the background note on the Conference by the UNCTAD secretariat (UNCLDC/III/1), different views on the nature and timing of these events were

expressed. It was agreed that the national programmes needed some form of endorsement by developing partners. However, some participants thought that the secretariat's proposals to expect donors to make commitments at the country-specific round tables or EORTs would be difficult to achieve in practice in many LDCs prior to the Conference. It might be possible to organize some country-level specific events at the Conference itself.

Regional expert meetings

29. Regional expert meetings are mandated by the General Assembly. They will not be confined to trade and investment but will address all issues, including an assessment of the previous two conferences.

Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee

30. The first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee (IPC) is planned for September 2000 and the second part by April 2001. In addition to feedback from the country preparatory process, the IPC should be provided with an analysis from the donor side of the difficulties encountered in meeting commitments to LDCs under previous programmes. OECD/DAC members should be requested to undertake a self-examination on this issue.

Sectoral, thematic and country-specific round tables

31. Thematic meetings could take place at the Conference itself. The following were among the themes to be addressed:

- An assessment of the impact of special measures in favour of LDCs;

- Financing for development (including debt conversion, foreign direct investment (FDI), capital flight, and domestic resource mobilization). This should be linked to the United Nations conference on the same topic, also scheduled for 2001. The conclusions of the 1999 Addis Ababa meeting of African Ministers of Finance and Planning should be taken into account as well;

- Capacity-building and institutional reform in LDCs.

Links with other events

32. Other forthcoming events and conferences would provide an opportunity for links with the Conference (and should bring together many worldwide themes) and a possible source of competition for attention. These included WTO, 1999; UNCTAD X, 2000; review of the Barbados Programme of Action, 1999; the five-year mid-term reviews of the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women; the Conference on International Migration, Development and Integration (Stockholm, September 1999); the United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, 2001; review of the World Summit

for Children, 2001; and work of the Commonwealth on small States. The Conference secretariat was requested to obtain from the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) secretariat a full list of events with which the Conference could be linked. The mid-2001 political environment prevailing among major development partners of LDCs would need to be carefully monitored.

The Conference

33. The Conference will be held in Brussels at a date to be determined between April and June 2001. Consultations on logistical matters are ongoing between the EU and UNCTAD.

Resources for the preparatory process and for the Conference

34. It was noted that, given the limited United Nations regular budget allocation, substantial extrabudgetary resources for preparations and for the Conference itself urgently need to be mobilized.

35. A budget has been prepared and submitted to the European Union for consideration. The EU expressed its willingness to consider providing support as both a host and a donor. More information will be available in September 1999. UNDP would be prepared to assist, particularly with country-level preparations, together with other organizations with field representatives.

36. Pending a definitive decision by the EU, as a matter of urgency, the secretariat was invited to seek extrabudgetary resources from bilateral donors and other sources, so as not to lose momentum.

B. Substantive issues

Introduction

37. The Meeting considered the substantive agenda for the Conference to be broad, as the Conference is about the overall sustainable socio-economic development of LDCs. However, there was general agreement on the need to identify critical areas and to set priorities, in order to invest efforts and resources into attacking the most critical bottlenecks first. This should be based on a thorough analysis of past experience and country situations. Both the preparatory process and the Conference itself should produce a feasible, tangible, measurable and action-oriented outcome.

38. The discussion on the substantive issues to be addressed by the Conference was based on the tentative list of constraints and themes identified in the note prepared by the secretariat (UNCLDC/III/1, paras. 11-14) and presented by the Executive Secretary of the Conference, as well as on a presentation to the Forum by Mr. Jack Stone, former Director of UNCTAD's Special Programme for LDCs.

Main themes and issues

39. In the light of the discussions, the following areas and themes which could constitute elements for the core substantive agenda for the Conference were identified:

(a) Domestic resource mobilization;

(b) External resource mobilization (ODA, technical assistance, South-South cooperation, FDI, debt relief, reversing capital flight), including formal agreements on targets for LDCs;

(c) Trade issues, market access and supply capacity for goods and services, including the role played by migrant remittances and the integration of LDCs into the multilateral trading system;

(d) Poverty reduction and social safety nets;

(e) Investment in education (including retention of trained manpower), health and infrastructure;

(f) Good governance, democratization, human rights and gender issues; and

(g) Integrated national and regional development.

40. The following issues were also proposed as meriting inclusion in the clusters of issues to be considered during the preparatory process:

(a) Peace and development: the plight of a number of LDCs which are suffering from civil strife and political instability called for a special set of policies and measures;

(b) Appropriate macroeconomic policies, including fair income distribution, creation of a favourable environment for private sector development, attraction of investment, both domestic and foreign, ODA management and institutional reforms;

(c) Support to LDCs' efforts in disaster mitigation, preparedness and prevention; and

(d) Access to information, and information technology.

41. A number of issues, including good governance, corruption, debt and capital flight, would have to be looked at from the perspective and in the light of the responsibility of both the LDCs and their development partners.

42. Some of the issues mentioned above were considered to be applicable to LDCs and their development partners across-the-board, while others were country-specific. Consequently, in

order to be meaningful and effective, a global programme of action in favour of LDCs would need to be based on country-level assessments of constraints, priorities and opportunities. The secretariat should arrange for three to five country studies to be conducted on an immediate and pilot basis, which would pave the way for country-level preparations in other LDCs.

43. The meeting emphasized the need, in addition to support measures, for a new approach and a "new mind set" by LDCs if they are to improve the chances of reversing the current marginalization in the global economy.

44. The Conference secretariat was encouraged to undertake a rigorous assessment of the benefits or lack thereof which have accrued to LDCs as a result of their LDC status.

45. It was noted that policies should be judged by their effects in practice. In this regard, studies should be undertaken on best practices which had been implemented in LDCs.

46. While emphasizing that the LDC Conference should not be solely limited to the problem of the lack of financial resources, participants felt there could be no discussion on the development of LDCs without touching on the question of funding, including comprehensive debt relief - an area in which, despite recent initiatives, much remained to be done. The Meeting therefore emphasized the critical role of ODA in the development of LDCs and stressed the importance of reaffirming aid targets and working towards an increase in the provision of ODA for LDCs. However, the need to ensure that the overall approach to the substantive preparations for the Conference is not donor-centred was stressed. It was therefore important to identify areas where ODA is absolutely necessary and can have an effective impact. ODA should not be the fuel, but the lubricant for the engine. An assessment should be done of the implementation of commitments undertaken by the LDCs' development partners in past programmes of action, and a study undertaken of the constraints which limited the ability of their development partners fully to honour the commitments. This should take the form of a self-assessment by OECD/DAC members.

47. A review of targets set in favour of LDCs should be conducted, and the possibility explored of moving from the present best-endeavour practices to making targets binding, similar to the WTO commitments.

48. In the area of trade, the main problems were considered to be on the supply side, but more remained to be done with regard to market access. The two are intricately linked and need to be addressed simultaneously.

49. Questions on migration and labour mobility were considered important for LDCs. In the context of globalization, improved mobility conditions contribute to the progress of the societies and economies of both the sending and the receiving countries. Among the benefits to LDCs were improvement to the balance of payments and resource mobilization through expatriate transfers.

50. The need to learn from the experience of the implementation of programmes of action adopted by major global conferences and their mid-term reviews was emphasized. Thematic clusters should be selected in a manner which would ensure the inclusion of findings from other global events and conferences preceding the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs.

51. The Meeting noted that a number of initiatives and programmes take note of the needs of LDCs and purport to adopt measures in their favour, many of them in the form of rhetoric, and there is therefore a need for drawing up a coherent and focused programme of action that will incorporate all these initiatives in a single broader framework.

52. The Meeting exchanged views on the historical evolution of the list of the least developed countries and the criteria used to designate them as such. The question is at present under consideration by CDP and the Economic and Social Council. For the purposes of the preparatory process for the Conference, the list of LDCs will be taken as it stands at present and at the time of the onference. It was not recommended that the Conference itself should deal with these matters.

ANNEX I

Programme of work

Wednesday, 21 July

10:00-10:15	Opening address by Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD and of the Third Conference
10:15-10:45	Presentation by Ms. Anna K. Tibaijuka, Executive Secretary of the Third Conference
10:45-10:50	Adoption of the agenda
10:50-13:00	General debate
15:00-18:00	Discussion of the preparatory process

- The Consultative Forum - its role, composition, work programme and future meetings
- Role of and consultations with civil society (NGOs, private sector, academia, etc.)
- Advocacy and promotion (DPI, high-level personalities, "Goodwill Ambassador")
- Country-level preparations:

  Preparation of country-specific programmes of action; National Preparatory Committees; link with EORT proposal
- Regional expert meetings: participation, topics, time and output
- Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee: terms of reference
- Sectoral, thematic and country-specific round tables
- Links with other events
- The Conference itself
- Resources for the preparatory events and the Conference

Thursday, 22 July

10:00-13:00	Discussion of substantive issues – Presentation by Mr. Jack Stone on the "Substantive agenda for a New and Comprehensive Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of LDCs in the Third Millennium" – Exchange of views, covering the issues raised by Mr. Stone - development constraints faced by LDCs; and priority issues and themes to be covered by the Conference
15:00-16:00	Discussion of substantive issues (continued)
16:00-17:30	Summary of main points arising from the discussion, including work programme and timetable

ANNEX II

Documentation

1. The Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries. The Least Developed Countries and Action in their Favour by the International Community (A/CONF.104/2/Rev.1)

2. Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (UNCTAD/RDP/LDC/58)

3. Report of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, New York, 25 September-6 October 1995 (TD/B/LDC/GR/8)

4. General Assembly Resolution 52/187: Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (A/RES/52/187)

5. General Assembly Resolution 53/182: Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (A/RES/53/182)

6. The Least Developed Countries 1998 Report (UNCTAD/LDC (1998))

7. Integrating Least Developed Countries into the Global Economy: Proposals for a Comprehensive New Plan of Action in the Context of the Third WTO Ministerial Conference - As adopted at the Coordinating Workshop for Senior Advisors to Ministers of Trade in LDCs held in Sun City, South Africa, 21-25 June 1999 (LDC/CW/SA/6)

8. World Trade Organization (1997). The High-level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least Developed Countries' Trade Development: Report of the Meeting (WT/COMTD/12)

9. World Trade Organization (1999). The Challenge of Integrating LDCs into the Multilateral Trading System (WT/GC/W/251)

ANNEX III

Attendance

1. The following States were represented at the Meeting:

Bangladesh (Coordinator of LDCs)
Belgium
Finland
Luxembourg
Sweden

2. The following intergovernmental organization was represented at the Meeting:

European Community

3. The following specialized agencies and related organization were represented at the Meeting:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
World Bank
International Monetary Fund
World Trade Organization

4. The Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Committee for Development Policy were represented at the Meeting. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO was also represented at the Meeting.

5. The following non-governmental organization was represented at the Meeting:

General Category

International Chamber of Commerce

6. The following resource person attended the Meeting: Mr. Jack Stone, Former Director, Special Programme for LDCs.

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Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for
the Third United Nations Conference on the
Least Developed Countries
First session
New York, 24 July 2000
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

FIRST INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Geneva, 20 July 1999

GE.00-51205 (E)
00-53792

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INTRODUCTION

1. The First Inter-Agency Meeting on the Preparatory Process for the Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs was convened in Geneva on 20 July 1999 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/182. The Meeting marked the official launch of the preparatory process for the Conference.

2. The Meeting was addressed by Mr. Patrizio Civili, Secretary, Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC); Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD and Secretary-General of the Conference; and Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Special Coordinator for LDCs and Executive Secretary of the Conference on LDCs.

3. Mr. Civili recalled the mandate for the Conference and for inter-agency consultations, as contained in General Assembly resolutions 52/187 and 53/182. He reiterated the important role played by inter-agency consultations in the preparatory process for the First and Second Conferences. He emphasized the need for an effective system of agency focal points for the preparatory process and the need to link that process with forthcoming global events.

4. Mr. Ricupero said that the inter-agency consultation mechanism had been established to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of all relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system for the purpose of preparations for and follow-up to the Conference. Inter-agency cooperation is an essential element for the success of the Conference. He recalled the statement made by the United Nations Secretary-General to the LDC Ministerial Meeting in October 1998, to the effect that the Conference should be an inclusive one that would serve as a rallying point for Governments, the United Nations, other international organizations, civil society and the private sector, with the singular purpose of fashioning a new development agenda for the LDCs. It must be a Conference that rests on serious preparatory work and draws heavily on national experiences of LDCs. The Conference is a United Nations-wide Conference and covers a range of issues in addition to trade. It is a global Conference addressing the development problems of LDCs. He stressed the need, right from the beginning, to ensure the full involvement of all relevant actors in their respective areas of competence and comparative advantage, thus giving an opportunity for a wide spectrum of actors to claim ownership of the preparatory process and the final outcome and to commit themselves to carrying out their respective responsibilities arising from the Conference.

5. The substantive agenda of the Conference is broad, since the Conference is about the overall sustainable socio-economic development of LDCs. However, to make progress, there is a need to identify critical areas and to set priorities. It would be futile to attempt to solve all the problems at once. It is therefore important for agencies to help in identifying the right priorities.

6. Mr. Ricupero reminded the Meeting not to overlook the fact that one of the major reasons why the previous programmes of action had had only limited success was because they were not accompanied by specific resource commitments. Thus, the securing of resources from donors for the implementation of the new comprehensive programme of action to be agreed at the next LDC Conference is the major challenge facing everyone. New approaches for mobilizing development finance need to be found.

7. Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka briefed the Meeting on the preparatory process for the Conference and presented the note prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat on the preparatory process (document UNCLDC/III/1). She raised several issues relating to resource requirements to undertake the envisaged activities in the preparatory process at the country and global levels, the country-level preparations, links with forthcoming United Nations events and activities, the frequency and scope of inter-agency consultations, the need for the designation of focal points in agencies for preparations for the Conference and the nature of the involvement of civil society in the preparatory process. She briefed the Meeting on the outcome of her recent consultations with the European Union, host of the Conference. The venue of the Conference is Brussels and the dates are from 14 to 20 May 2001.

I. DISCUSSION/COMMENTS

8. In the ensuing discussions, representatives of agencies commented on the issues raised by the Secretary-General and by the Executive Secretary of the Conference, as well as those contained in the secretariat note. They generally agreed with the proposal to have a bottom-up approach to the preparatory process, involving a comprehensive set of activities at the country level. The need to create partnerships and involve all actors was emphasized. Several comments were made on the proposal to convene thematic and country round-table meetings during the Conference. In particular, participants in the Meeting commented on the relationship between these events to be convened during the Conference and the traditional country round table and consultative group meetings. The experience of the High-level Meeting on LDCs convened by WTO in 1997 was considered as a relevant precedent in this regard. Participants also stressed the need for appropriate sequencing of preparatory activities.

9. Several substantive areas not included in the note were proposed for consideration. These include market access, institutional reforms, integration into the multilateral trading system, peace culture, mitigation of natural disasters and water resources. While recognizing the importance of all the above issues and others which have a bearing on the development of LDCs, the Executive Secretary of the Conference reminded the Meeting of the remark by the Secretary-General that efficiency and effectiveness would lie in investing effort and resources in solving the most critical development bottlenecks first. She also mentioned that the least developed countries themselves and their development partners will have a major role in setting the substantive agenda for the Conference. A two-day Consultative Forum meeting, comprising LDCs, development partners, several United Nations agencies and civil society, was being convened essentially for this purpose. The outcome of the Consultative Forum will be conveyed to the participants in the Inter-Agency Meetings.

10. To ensure an effective preparatory process at the country level, the Meeting emphasized the important role of the United Nations Resident Coordinators and field representatives of the World Bank, IMF, FAO, UNFPA, WMO, European Union and others. It was important to brief those country-level representatives on the preparatory process and to involve them fully at an early stage.

11. The representative of UNDP, recalling that most of UNDP's resources are allocated to low-income countries and LDCs, reiterated the agency's total commitment to ensuring the

success of the preparatory process for the Conference, its readiness to cooperate with the World Bank and the European Union and its willingness to support country-level preparations financially.

12. The representative of the World Bank reiterated the Bank's support of the preparatory process. He sought further clarifications on the nature of that process at the country level as it relates to the setting up of the agenda, and the nature and scope of the extraordinary round table meetings and thematic round table meetings and their relationships to the World Bank consultative group meetings and UNDP round table meetings.

13. Representatives of other agencies also conveyed the support of their respective agencies for the preparatory process for the Conference.

II. FOLLOW-UP ACTION

14. It was tentatively agreed to convene the Second Inter-Agency Meeting in October 1999, in either Geneva or New York, depending on circumstances. The Executive Secretary would inform participants in due time as to the date and venue.

15. Agencies were requested as quickly as possible to designate focal points who will continue to participate in the preparatory activities leading to the Conference.

16. The Executive Secretary of the Conference will consult with agencies with field representation on the modalities of briefing their field representatives on the preparatory process and their envisaged role in it.

17. The Executive Secretary of the Conference, in cooperation with agency focal points, will ensure the link between the preparatory activities and forthcoming major global events.

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Geneva, 11 April 2000

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INTRODUCTION

1. The second meeting of the Consultative Forum on the Preparatory Process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was held in Geneva on 11 April 2000. It was a follow-up to the first meeting, held in Geneva on 22 July 1999.

2. The **Executive Secretary of the Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs (LDC-III), Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka**, opened the meeting on behalf of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

3. The meeting adopted the agenda as proposed by the Conference secretariat (see annex I).

I. PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE CONFERENCE

4. For its consideration of the substantive agenda items, the meeting had before it three documents: a briefing note on the preparatory process for the Conference, which included a number of annexes containing the report of the Regional Expert-Level Preparatory Meeting for the English-Speaking African LDCs, the report of the Regional Expert-Level Preparatory Meeting for the Asian and Pacific LDCs and Guidelines for the Preparation of the Programme of Action at Country Level; a note on contributions by organizations and agencies to the preparatory process for the Conference; and the draft report of the Second Inter-Agency Meeting of the Preparatory Process for the Conference.

5. The **Executive Secretary** of the Conference stated that the preparatory process at the country level had been launched in 46 LDCs.

6. Following country visits by members of the UNCTAD secretariat, National Preparatory Committees (NPCs) had been established and Local Resource Persons (LRPs) appointed to provide substantive support to these Committees. Three regional coordinators had also been appointed to provide substantive support to the NPCs and the LRPs. In addition, LDCs had been encouraged to establish, where they did not yet exist, Local Development Partners Forums (LDPFs) composed of bilateral and multilateral development partners on the one hand and the Government and other stakeholders on the other.

7. The European Union (EU) had facilitated the country-level preparations by providing a grant of ECU 80,000 for each LDC. However, it now appeared that these resources were available only to LDCs who were members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of States, and the speaker expressed particular concern about securing finance for non-ACP LDCs. Nevertheless, the aid available so far had proved critical in providing momentum and assisting country-level preparations. In addition, some local United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Offices had expressed their willingness to provide support to the country-level preparatory process, and bilateral and other donors represented in LDCs were being encouraged to do likewise through the NPCs.

8. She expressed the hope that some LDCs would be able to submit the first drafts of their country programmes of action by mid-June 2000 to enable the secretariat to distribute these documents to member States so that they could be discussed at the first meeting of the

Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, to be held in New York from 24 to 28 July 2000 in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 52/187. Those LDCs that would, for practical reasons, not be able to present a draft programme of action at that meeting were expected to submit at least a review of the results of their programme of action for the 1990s.

9. The challenge facing the management of the preparatory process was how to ensure that the country-level programmes of action would indeed become a framework for coordinating international support to the LDCs in the next 10 years. In her view, this issue had been foreseen by the General Assembly, which in paragraph 6 of its resolution 53/182 "called upon the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank to link the forthcoming round-table and consultative group meetings to the preparatory process of the Conference, and to ensure that they make substantive contributions to the Conference". It was important to give operational content to this recommendation.

10. With regard to preparations at the regional level, she stated that two expert-level preparatory meetings had been held - the first in Addis Ababa for English-speaking African LDCs and the second in Kathmandu for Asian and Pacific LDCs. The third meeting - for the French-speaking African LDCs and Haiti - was scheduled to be held in Niamey, Niger, from 18 to 20 April 2000. In addition the Conference secretariat in cooperation with the regional economic commissions would organize regional high-level preparatory events during the preparatory process. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was planning a special event on the substantive issues for the Conference, to be held in Addis Ababa in November 2000 on the occasion of the meeting of the Ministers of Finance and Planning. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was preparing similar events. The UNCTAD secretariat would make every effort to solicit the active participation of subregional economic groupings in the preparatory process for the Conference.

11. With regard to the global level, she emphasized the critical importance of advocacy and publicity. There was a need to mobilize greater public awareness and support in donor countries for the LDCs if the Conference was to agree new concessions for the latter. Much groundwork had to be done to reach the public, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media and so forth. This required a clearly defined division of labour among all those responsible for the preparation of the Conference. Initiatives had to be taken at the national level in all LDCs as well as in their development partners.

12. Referring to the substantive agenda of LDC-III, she stated that although the Conference would deal with all the development problems facing LDCs, there was a need to focus on priorities and on the critical bottlenecks. In this regard, while country-level programmes of action would indicate national-level priorities, the global agenda should be centred on achieving two goals. The first of these was to induce those countries that had not honoured commitments agreed to at previous global conferences to do so. The second was to secure additional concessions for LDCs in order to assist their efforts to integrate into the global economy in a beneficial manner. Such concessions might involve, for example, granting bound duty-free and quota-free market access for all products exported from LDCs.

13. Concerning progress related to resource mobilization for the preparation of the Conference, she stated that despite concerted efforts by the secretariat, few donors had responded

to the call for funds. So far, support had been secured from the EU, which had in principle granted ECU 80,000 for each LDC, although, as already mentioned, practical arrangements for accessing those funds had proved problematic for non-ACP LDCs. These problems need to be sorted out urgently. Other donors that have pledged support included the Netherlands, about $900,000; Belgium, $250,000; Finland, about $350,000; Italy, $100,000; and Sweden, about $500,000. A private firm based in Zurich - A&P Partners - had pledged $100,000. Since a total of about $16.9 million was required, the pledges made so far amounted to only one third of that sum. She took the opportunity to thank all those that had responded to the appeal, and she urged other donors to provide assistance as soon as possible.

14. The representative of **Bangladesh**, speaking on behalf of the LDCs, emphasized the importance of the country-level preparations for elaborating a tangible global programme of action at LDC-III. The national preparatory process should be demand-driven and nationally owned. There was a need to maintain a high quality of country programmes, but this might be difficult in view of the fact that the programmes had to be submitted by 16 June 2000. He was concerned that the Asian and Pacific LDCs not members of the ACP group would not benefit from the financial assistance provided by the EU for country-level preparations. This problem should be resolved as soon as possible in order to avoid further delay. He noted that he had chaired the expert-level preparatory meeting for the Asian and Pacific LDCs held in Kathmandu from 3 to 5 April 2000. The expert-level meetings considered and adopted guidelines for the preparation of country-level programmes of action. He stressed that the guidelines were not meant to be a straitjacket, but to ensure that the country-level preparations were of a high quality in terms of their content and presentation. It was obvious that the priorities for action would depend on country needs and requirements. He said that the UNCTAD secretariat should, first, help individual LDCs to prepare their country memoranda; secondly, assist them in formulating a common strategy; and thirdly, service the Third LDC Conference. In his view, the Permanent Missions in Geneva should be involved in the work of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee through expanded bureau and related activities between the first and second meetings of the Committee. Also, the UNCTAD secretariat should provide substantive inputs to the Preparatory Committee. He raised some practical problems that required urgent answers, including how to induce the private sector to be associated with the preparatory process, to what extent were the country programmes going to be owned by LDCs, and their status vis-à-vis existing national plans of action.

15. The representative of the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stated that his group fully supported the preparatory process and the Third LDC Conference itself, which was expected to adopt policy measures and actions designed to overcome the structural constraints faced by the LDCs. Recalling his group's support during the first and second Conferences on LDCs, he stated that the Group of 77 and China would spare no effort to ensure that LDC-III reaffirmed the principle of shared responsibility and strengthened partnership for growth and development. In that respect, he noted that the innovation of shifting the focus of attention to country-level preparations was of great importance, since that would help to address critical issues facing many LDCs, including the agricultural sector, diversification of LDCs' economies through industrialization, socio-economic infrastructure development, reinforcement of science and technology in LDCs, and

human resources development. Taking the example of the recent disasters in Mozambique and Ethiopia, the speaker emphasized the need for urgent action to be taken by the international community, given the vulnerability of LDCs to natural disasters.

16. He concluded by emphasizing the fact that, in the light of the experience with the two previous Conferences, effective follow-up and monitoring mechanisms were crucial for success in implementing the outcomes of the Conference. He also emphasized the important role that economic cooperation among developing countries could play in strengthening LDCs' capacities in various fields. In this context, he referred to the offer of market access made by some developing countries at the High-Level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least Developed Countries' Trade Development held by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in October 1997.

17. The representative of **Portugal**, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the EU's hosting of the Third LDC Conference in Brussels demonstrated its concern about the plight of the LDCs in the face of the negative effects of globalization. In this connection, the EU welcomed the Consultative Forum, which provided opportunity for discussion of new strategies and appropriate plans of action. He believed that it was imperative to demonstrate a coherence of policy at both the national and international levels. This coherence would serve as a conduit to facilitate the political will to attain poverty eradication goals.

18. He emphasized that the preparatory process had to be inclusive and transparent. All parties, including the United Nations, its specialized agencies, donors, LDC Governments, NGOs and the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank, had an important responsibility and an important role to play. There were urgent questions before the LDC Conference, and it was vital to combine efforts when examining development issues so as to provide the maximum benefits to the citizens involved. These issues included education, health, environment, food security, drug trafficking and consumption, and debt cancellation efforts. The EU was committed to assisting LDCs in these areas. To ensure effectiveness, it should provide practical solutions for improving the status of LDCs. The current partnership agreement between the EU and LDCs was a mechanism that would promote global development policies, and that was to be commended.

19. He stressed the importance of good governance, human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the fight against corruption. These were preconditions for development, since democracy and development were not incompatible aims. The EU was deeply committed to the process of assisting LDCs' integration into the world economy. This commitment had been expressed at the UNCTAD X Conference, and the EU wished to reiterate it. He believed that the LDC Conference should go beyond reflections and aim at promoting significant progress in each of the countries concerned. The EU attached great importance to the Conference and believed it would provide an opportunity to reinforce in a complementary manner ongoing and future actions in favour of the LDCs.

20. The representative of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**, speaking as a member of the Secretariat (Development Cooperation Directorate) and not as a spokesperson for the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), provided an update of the work currently being undertaken. He said that the DAC High Level Meeting of Ministers responsible for development cooperation and Heads of Agencies to be convened on 11-12 May

would discuss matters which were relevant to the LDC Conference. Issues on the agenda would include poverty reduction; partnership strategies; country-level frameworks; policy coherence; quantity, quality and catalytic uses of ODA; private flows; debt sustainability and the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative; the new international financial architecture and global public goods. Together with the Development Cooperation 1999 Report (issued in February 2000) and a seminar on "Development Finance - the Way Forward" held on 29-30 March 2000, these discussions would shape OECD and members' inputs to the 2000 United Nations High Level Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development (FFD) as well as the LDC Conference. He emphasized the importance of fostering a linkage between the FFD Event (now foreseen as early as June 2000) and the Conference.

21. The representative of the **European Commission** reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to cooperate fully with UNCTAD in order to ensure a successful Conference. The Commission would like to discuss with UNCTAD and settle at an early date all matters related to facilities and logistics for the Conference. Since the holding of the Conference at the European Parliament Building was itself symbolic, it was desirable to involve parliamentarians and political leaders in one of the events to be organized. Concerning funds for the Liaison Committee for Development NGOs to the European Union, he said that the matter was under consideration.

22. The representative of the **Liaison Committee for Development NGOs to the European Union** reaffirmed its commitment to act as a focal point for organizing the NGO Forum in Brussels before and during the Conference. He believed that the Forum should facilitate and support NGO advocacy work, build consensus in the NGO sector and raise public awareness about the Conference. He considered the NGO advocacy role important in generating public support for increased levels of official development assistance (ODA) to LDCs. With regard to modalities for activities to prepare the Conference, he stated that an NGO steering group made up of European NGO networks and Belgian NGO umbrella organizations had been established. Its first meeting, to discuss the division of labour, had taken place recently. He also stated that in order to attract large numbers of NGO participants at the NGO Forum, his organization's Annual Assembly would be held back to back with the LDC Conference.

23. The representative of the **International Chamber of Commerce** said that although her organization had not yet contributed to the preparatory process, it stood ready to make a contribution. She referred to ongoing work in connection with preparation and dissemination of Investment Guides. These had been prepared for Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda, and the aim was to cover all 48 LDCs. She also mentioned the extensive ICC network which could be mobilized, as there were local committees in many LDCs. She suggested that one way of reaching the business community to inform it about the Third LDC Conference would be to make use of the forthcoming ICC Conference to be held in Nigeria this year.

II. ISSUES RAISED DURING THE DISCUSSIONS

24. The statements and discussions on the substantive agenda items, namely progress in the preparatory process at the country, regional and global levels, consideration of organizational

and substantive issues related to the Conference, and consultations between the Conference secretariat and Forum members on resource mobilization for the preparatory process, raised the following issues:

- Concern that time was running out for LDCs to present country programmes by 15 June 2000;

- Whether the process at the country level ensured ownership of country programmes;

- The relationship between the preparatory process and ongoing planning exercises and development initiatives involving bilateral and multilateral development partners at the national level;

- Whether NGOs and civil society were adequately involved in the preparatory process;

- Whether country programmes would be part of the Global Programme.

25. In response, the Executive Secretary stated that:

- It was not expected that all LDCs would submit their preliminary country programmes by June 2000. But, as a minimum, each of them would be expected to provide an assessment of the results of its programme of action during the 1990s;

- The National Preparatory Committees ensured the participation not only of different government departments but also of civil society, NGOs, the private sector, academia, the media, etc.;

- The country programmes of action should, in her view, inform the formulation of the Global Programme of Action;

- The country programme of action should draw on and reflect priorities contained in existing national plans (annual/multi-year) and sectoral programmes and initiatives, and would constitute a cohesive development framework for the next 10 years, providing a basis for resource mobilization for that period.

26. The exchange of views with regard to preparations at regional and global levels touched on the following issues:

- To ensure that the preparatory process and the Conference itself were complementary to, and not parallel with, other conferences;

- The need to focus the launching of the preparatory process on raising awareness and generating support in donor countries to enable their representatives to make commitments;

- The need to mobilize resources for the preparatory process, these to be made available before it is too late;

- A request for a breakdown of the budget for the preparation of the Conference;

- A request for information regarding the involvement of NGOs (in LDCs and development partners);

- The extent to which parliaments/political leaders were involved in the preparatory process;

- Whether the LDC Conference would be superfluous in view of the many sectoral conferences which had adopted special measures for LDCs.

27. In response, the Executive Secretary stated that:

- The LDC Conference was not superfluous: it would draw on previous conferences, and would coordinate the various supportive actions;

- Preparations in LDCs had to be complemented by increasing awareness and support in development partner countries;

- Funds were urgently needed to make good the budgetary shortfall;

- NGO mobilization extended to LDCs;

- Consultations were being held to define the role of political leaders in the context of the Conference.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

28. There was general agreement that the key to a successful Conference and a meaningful outcome in Brussels lay in a preparatory process and country programmes of action that were of a high quality, nationally owned and broad-based.

29. There was a need to focus the preparatory process on raising awareness and generating support in donor countries to enable their representatives to make new commitments at the Conference.

30. The Conference should agree new concessions in favour of LDCs. To secure such concessions, a successful campaign to win the support of the public in donor countries was required. Consequently, there was a need for vigorous advocacy work before the Conference. In this context, the role of NGOs was emphasized.

31. Since the Conference was a United Nations conference, all agencies of the United Nations system had a vital role to play in ensuring its success. Their respective roles and contributions needed to be determined through regular bilateral and multilateral consultations.

32. There was an urgent need for adequate resources to finance the preparatory process and the Conference. Donors that had not yet made contributions were urged to do so without delay.

33. The third meeting of the Consultative Forum would be held back to back with the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, which was due to take place in New York, from 24 to 28 July 2000.

ANNEX I

Agenda

10.00 - 10.10	Welcoming remarks by Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Secretary, LDC-III
10.10 - 10.15	Adoption of the Agenda of the Meeting
10.15 - 12.00	Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Conference on the progress in the preparatory process for the Conference – Statement by the representatives of LDCs – Statement by the Chairman of the Group of 77 in Geneva – Statement by the representative of the European Union/EC – Followed by other EU representatives wishing to take the floor – Statement by a DAC representative – Statement by Liaison Committee for Development NGOs to the European Union (Focal point for NGO Forum)
12.00 - 13.00	Exchange of views on the progress in the preparatory process at the country, regional and global levels
14.30 - 16.00	Consideration of organizational and substantive issues related to the Conference - Report from the Second Inter-Agency Meeting on LDC-III and discussion
16.00 - 17.30	Consultations between Conference secretariat and Forum members on resource mobilization for the preparatory process – Finalization of the draft report
17.30 - 18.00	Consideration and adoption of the report of the Meeting
18.00	Closure of Meeting

ANNEX II

List of documents

1. Briefing note on the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

2. Draft report of the Second Inter-Agency Meeting on the Preparatory Process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

3. Note verbale

4. Note on contributions by organizations and agencies to the preparatory process for the Conference

5. Draft agenda

6. The Least Developed Countries 1999 Report (Overview)

7. Statistical synopsis of the least developed countries

ANNEX III

Participation

1. The following States members of UNCTAD were represented at the Meeting:

Bangladesh
Belgium
Canada
Egypt
Finland
France
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Italy
Malaysia
Netherlands
Portugal
Sweden

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the Meeting:

European Community
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

3. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the Meeting:

International Labour Organization
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Health Organization
World Bank
International Monetary Fund
Universal Postal Union
International Telecommunication Union
World Meteorological Organization
World Intellectual Property Organization
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
International Atomic Energy Agency
World Trade Organization

4. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries were represented at the Meeting. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO was also represented at the Meeting.

5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the Meeting:

General Category

Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union
International Chamber of Commerce

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REPORT OF THE SECOND INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Geneva, 10 April 2000

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Inter-Agency Meeting on the Preparatory Process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was held in Geneva on 10 April 2000 in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/182. The meeting was a follow-up to the first Inter-Agency Meeting, held in Geneva on 20 July 1999.

2. The **Executive Secretary of the Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs, Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka**, opened the Inter-Agency Meeting on behalf of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

I. PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE CONFERENCE

3. In her statement on the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs the **Executive Secretary** of the Conference briefed the meeting on progress made in the preparatory process for the Conference at national, regional and global levels, as well as on the substantive agenda for the Conference.

Preparations at country level

4. She said that the country-level preparatory process had been launched in 46 LDCs with country visits by members of the UNCTAD secretariat. Following those visits, National Preparatory Committees (NPCs) had been established and Local Resource Persons (LRPs) designated to provide substantive support to those Committees. Three regional coordinators had been appointed to provide substantive support to the NPCs and LRPs. The assistance by the European Union (EU) had proved critical in lending momentum and seriousness to country-level preparations. In addition, some local UNDP Offices had expressed their willingness to provide support to the country-level preparatory process, and bilateral and other donors represented in LDCs were being encouraged to support the country-level preparatory process through the NPCs.

5. She said that the country-level preparatory process required the establishment of Local Development Partners Forums (LDPFs), which would include bilateral and multilateral development partners. It was expected that the NPCs and the LDPFs would form the Local Consultative Forums for the country-level preparatory process.

6. It was hoped that some LDCs would be able to submit the first drafts of their country programmes of action by mid-June 2000 to enable the secretariat to distribute these documents to member States so that they could be discussed at the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, to be held in New York from 24 to 28 July 2000. Those LDCs that would, for practical reasons, not be able to present a draft programme of action at that meeting were expected to submit at least a review of the results of their programme of action for the 1990s. This would be the first part of the draft programme of action, taking stock of developments in the 1990s in accordance with the guidelines agreed for the presentation of the country-level programme of action.

7. Experience regarding the pace of country-level preparations was rather mixed. In a number of countries, the setting up of the preparatory mechanisms had been delayed owing to the sheer complexity of coordination at various government levels or between sectoral ministries. In other countries, no action was initiated until the necessary resources had been made available.

8. She emphasized that the approach to country-level preparations had been to make it clear that they were meant to reduce parallel and overlapping planning demands by bringing all initiatives together within a coordinated planning framework that would guide development activities and international support over a 10-year period.

9. She called upon the meeting to make practical suggestions about how to give effect to the call by the General Assembly to the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank to link the forthcoming round-table and consultative group meetings to the preparatory process for the Conference, and to ensure that they made a substantive contribution to the Conference and that country-level programmes of action had a clear "destination" both at national and international level.

Regional-level preparations

10. At the regional level, two expert-level preparatory meetings had been held - the first in Addis Ababa from 27 to 29 March 2000 for English-speaking African LDCs and the second in Kathmandu from 3 to 5 April 2000 for the Asian and Pacific LDCs. The third meeting - for French-speaking African LDCs and Haiti - was scheduled to be held in Niamey from 18 to 20 April 2000. The Conference secretariat in cooperation with the regional economic commissions would organize regional high-level preparatory events during the preparatory process. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was planning a special event on the substantive issues for the Conference, to be held in Addis Ababa in November 2000 on the occasion of the meeting of the Ministers of Finance and Planning. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was preparing similar events.

Global-level preparations

11. At the global level, a major concern in the preparatory process was how to succeed in the area of advocacy and publicity. If the Conference was to succeed, support for the commitments to be negotiated had to be secured with different constituencies well in advance in order to improve the chances of a significant breakthrough in Brussels. Much groundwork needed to be done involving all stakeholders, with a clearly defined division of labour. Initiatives had to be taken at the national level in all member States. If ownership of the country-level programme of action was being encouraged for LDCs at the national level, the development partners should likewise be encouraged to create national preparatory mechanisms to secure understanding and support for the global commitments to be adopted at the Conference. Since the Conference was not for LDCs, but about LDCs, preparations had to be conducted in all members States, particularly those that were key development partners for LDCs. Some donor countries had already taken exemplary steps at national level in this direction, and should be commended. The speaker was hopeful that preparations to be undertaken through the NGOs and the private sector would help to move this process forward.

Substantive agenda for the Conference

12. The substantive agenda for the Brussels Conference was discussed at length in the briefing note prepared by the secretariat and distributed to participants. She stressed that although the Conference would deal with all the development problems facing LDCs, with all their many dimensions and ramifications, success would lie in focusing on the critical bottlenecks. Spreading the agenda too wide and too thin might mean drowning in details. In this regard, while country-level programmes of action would indicate national-level priorities, and the relevant sectoral agencies knew very well the needs of different countries, the global agenda might benefit from concentrating on achieving two things. The first of these was to induce those countries that had not honoured commitments agreed at past global conferences to do so. The second was to secure additional concessions for LDCs in order to assist their efforts to integrate into the global economy in a beneficial manner.

13. A number of comments were made in the ensuing discussion.

- Some speakers expressed concern that there was not enough time for preparation of the country programmes of action (CPAs). If these were to be submitted by June, there were now scarcely two months left;

- Ensuring the participation of all stakeholders (Governments, NGOs and academia) in the preparation of the CPAs was considered by many to be the key to their credibility and ownership;

- Some speakers sought clarification about the relationship between the CPAs and the existing annual/five-year perspective plans;

- Others indicated that for the CPAs to have any status, they had, like the existing development programmes, to go through a process of validation, e.g. adoption by Parliament;

- Some participants felt that the task of preparing CPAs was not so arduous, because the basic information existed in annual/five-year perspective plans and other relevant documents. The CPAs should draw heavily on these sources;

- One participant drew attention to a planning exercise which had just been completed in a number of Asian LDCs and argued that there was no need to conduct a new exercise. The CPAs for the Asian LDCs should be based on the plans which had just been adopted.

14. With regard to the UNCTAD secretariat's proposal that special or extraordinary round tables be held to give effect to United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/182:

- One participant noted that there was no General Assembly mandate for convening "extraordinary" round tables as such. What the General Assembly called for was the use of the existing mechanisms where possible. In his view, there was in any case not enough time before the Conference to organize any such extraordinary round tables.

II. NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AGENCIES TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE CONFERENCE

15. For the discussions on this item, the **Executive Secretary** introduced a paper entitled "Note on contributions by organizations and agencies to the preparatory process for the Conference". Its objective was to facilitate an exchange of views among the agencies in order to clarify their respective roles during the preparatory stage as well as during the Conference itself.

16. She highlighted four main headings under which the agencies, at various stages (national, regional and global levels), could make their contributions. The indicative thematic and/or sectoral topics included: (i) governance, peace and social stability; (ii) the challenge of financing growth and development in LDCs; (iii) overcoming marginalization and enhancing LDCs' productive capacities through trade and investment; and (iv) enhancing programme implementation performance by establishing operational links between the Global Programme of Action and the country-level programmes of action, country-specific/regional round-table meetings; and selected country success stories or best practices.

17. During the discussions, observations were made by representatives of agencies. In general, commitment to the preparatory process and the Conference itself was reaffirmed. Those agencies that had offices in LDCs stated that they had instructed their field offices to support the preparatory work at the national level.

18. More specifically, representatives of agencies made the points set out below.

19. The representative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development provided an update on the work currently being undertaken by his organization. He said that the Development Assistance Committee's High-Level Meeting of Ministers responsible for Development Cooperation and Heads of Agencies, to be held on 11 and 12 May 2000, would discuss matters relevant to the LDC Conference. Issues on the agenda would include poverty reduction; partnership strategies; country-level frameworks; policy coherence; quantity, quality and catalytic uses of official development assistance (ODA); private flows; debt sustainability and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative; the new international financial architecture; and global public goods. Together with the *Development Cooperation 1999 Report* (issued in February 2000) and a seminar on development finance ("The Way Forward"), held on 29 and 30 March 2000, those discussions would shape the OECD's and members' inputs to the United Nations high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development (FFD) as well as the LDC Conference. He emphasized the importance of fostering a linkage between the FFD event (now scheduled for June 2000) and the LDC Conference.

20. The **representative of the World Trade Organization** stated that his organization, like the other agencies and multilateral institutions, would contribute, as appropriate and in accordance with its mandate, to the achievement of the objectives of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. He noted, however, that the WTO functioned at

the multilateral (global) level, and did not have country-level or regional representation. Nevertheless, addressing the concerns, problems and marginalization of LDCs was an objective to which it attached priority and to which it remained deeply committed.

21. The WTO was a member-driven organization and its members had to determine the details of the contribution to be made to the LDC Conference. Consideration was currently being given to including an item on the Conference on the agenda of the Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries for appropriate consideration. Such consideration would afford members the opportunity to express views and positions and make recommendations.

22. Irrespective of the details of any specific proposals that might be made, the WTO continued to pursue and implement its core mandate, which was trade liberalization through negotiated and autonomous improvements in market access, ensuring the security of market access, and eliminating restrictions and barriers to trade, including for LDCs. Trade was the engine for growth, and economic growth was indispensable to poverty reduction. In that connection, the WTO Director-General was consulting intensively on several issues before the General Council, one of which was the enhancing of market access opportunities for LDCs in order to assist their efforts to benefit from the non-discriminatory rules-based system.

23. Furthermore, the Director-General was also consulting with WTO members on the capacity-building and technical assistance needs of LDCs. In this regard, two issues were noteworthy. The first of these was the consultations of the Director-General with the objective of securing an increase in financial resources for WTO technical assistance, of which LDCs were the principal beneficiaries. The second was the improvements to the functioning of the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance, currently under mandated review. The Director-General had accorded the highest priority to considering such improvements. To that end, he had convened a meeting of the heads of the six core agencies (World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, ITC and WTO) to consider the results of the review of the Integrated Framework, with a view to improving the latter's functioning and hence the quality of assistance delivered to LDCs.

24. The representative of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** expressed concern about the coordination and time-frame of the task of combining 48 country programmes of action into a single, global programme. He asked what exactly was expected of each relevant international agency. Was it to make an evaluation of developments in the relevant sectors, or to propose a new plan of action for the future? For example, UNESCO had a global plan of action for LDCs: was it to be inserted in the Global Programme of Action for LDCs? He advocated that each agency, or a number of them, have responsibility for organizing a special event during the Conference. He expressed UNESCO's readiness to act in this capacity (in respect of science and technology, and culture).

25. The representative of the **Food and Agriculture Organization** informed the meeting of FAO's current work in preparing a study on the role of agriculture in the development of the LDCs. This study assessed the many constraints faced by the LDC's agricultural sectors,

examined ways to improve relevant supply capacities and competitiveness, envisaged strategies for agricultural development in the LDCs and drew relevant lessons from success stories in developing countries. During the preparation of the study, FAO hoped to be able to benefit from the preparatory process for the Conference and looked forward to close cooperation with its organizers on agricultural development, and trade and food security in the LDCs.

26. The representative of the **World Health Organization** described a useful dual approach to the role of the agencies. One way of contributing to the Conference would be through classic thematic reporting, with a report on issues and policies along the lines used at the previous two Conferences. Another way of approaching sectoral topics, less traditional, would consist in examining the implications for the relevant sectors of the three or four dominant themes of the Conference (aid, trade, investment, etc.), as these generally related to all sectors, and were conducive to a useful analysis of constraints and opportunities. For example, regarding trade matters, WHO, UNCTAD and WTO had already worked together on issues of common interest (e.g. trade in health services) and could focus their work on LDC-specific issues.

27. The representative of the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization** confirmed the interest of UNIDO in contributing to the Conference, but she was not yet in a position to express a firm commitment. She pointed out that UNIDO, in the context of the 2001 General Conference, was considering the organization of an LDC symposium which would be preceded by expert group meetings on issues such as technological development and enhancement of productivity and competitiveness. These activities could be aligned with the preparatory process of LDC III. For the Conference itself, UNIDO might consider the hosting of a parallel event, which could be in the form of a thematic panel discussion, or a private sector meeting or investment forum and which could be organized in cooperation with UNCTAD. These ideas were still at a very preliminary stage and would need to be further substantiated in-house and with other system actors.

28. The representative of the **World Intellectual Property Organization** said that WIPO's initiative to address the marginalization and development problems of the LDCs and the constraints facing them as they sought to become integrated into the culture of intellectual property and the world economy focused on enhancing the ability of public administration and the private sector to formulate and implement appropriate intellectual property policies and strengthen managerial and technical capacities to provide the service infrastructure needed to support intellectual property, as requested by the WIPO member States.

29. Since 1998, WIPO had been implementing Nationally Focused Action Plans (NFAPs) for the benefit of LDCs and had been assisting them in building up or upgrading their intellectual property offices with adequate institutional infrastructure and resources, qualified staff, modern management techniques and access to information technology support systems. WIPO had sent advisory missions, on request, to intellectual property offices in LDCs to give advice on modernizing management systems and streamlining administrative procedures. It had sponsored visits by officials of LDCs to offices in industrialized countries to study various aspects of modernization. In addition, LDCs had received computer equipment from WIPO.

30. In the area of copyright and related rights, advice and assistance had been given in connection with the setting up or strengthening of collective management societies in LDCs. With regard to the implementation of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS Agreement), WIPO had organized interregional, regional, subregional and national meetings for LDCs and presented a clear and balanced view of the Agreement to enable them to assess the conformity or otherwise of their existing enforcement mechanisms vis-à-vis the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement.

31. It is the strongly held belief of the Director-General of WIPO that LDCs individually and collectively should take full advantage of all initiatives aimed at institution-building and at enhancing their human production capacities with a view to improving their performance, nationally, regionally and internationally.

32. In this context, in preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs, WIPO was working closely with UNCTAD and other international organizations. It had organized a High-Level Interregional Roundtable on Intellectual Property for Least Developed Countries in 1999. This had been addressed by Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, in his capacity as the Secretary-General of the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs. In 2000, a number of national, subregional and regional meetings were being organized in preparation for that Conference. The report of the High-Level Interregional Roundtable and the various reports on WIPO's activities would be used as a contribution by WIPO to the Conference.

33. The representative of the **International Telecommunication Organization** said that his organization's objective was to facilitate universal access to modern information technology. It had a special programme of action for LDCs and gave more and more assistance to those countries. Information technology was unevenly distributed, even among LDCs. New technologies could enhance the microeconomic trading environment as well as provide foreign exchange earning opportunities to countries, including LDCs, which made appropriate investments.

34. The representative of the **Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries** (OSCAL/DESA) said that it was important to undertake a review of the outcome of major United Nations Conferences and their follow-up in relation to LDCs, as well as the linkages between these global conferences and LDC III. Furthermore, in order to highlight the key structural issues affecting the productive capacity and hence growth and development of LDCs, OSCAL intended to make the following inputs: drawing on the work of DESA and the Commission on Sustainable Development on energy, it would prepare a review of energy potential and utilization in LDCs, highlighting problems and constraints, as appropriate; jointly with UNESCO, UNCTAD and ECA, it would organize an ad hoc expert group meeting on science and technology for development of LDCs. It was also pertinent to note that, at the Consultative Forum, DESA had specifically been requested by the representative of the European Community to make a commitment to prepare the report on linkages to major conferences, to be ready for the first session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Participants in the meeting reaffirmed their support for the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs and the Conference itself.

36. Bilateral and multilateral consultations between and among the agencies were encouraged in order to ensure coordination and synergies so as to enhance joint cooperative efforts. In this context, the need for consultations between the UNDP, the World Bank and UNCTAD, with a view to working out modalities for giving effect to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 53/182, was emphasized.

37. It was agreed that the Third Inter-Agency Meeting would be held in New York in July 2000, back to back with the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee.

ANNEX I

Agenda

10:00 - 10:10	Welcoming remarks by Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Secretary, LDC-III
10:10 - 10:15	Adoption of the Agenda of the Meeting
10:15 - 10.45	Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Conference on the progress in the preparatory process for the Conference
10:45 - 12:15	General discussions
12:15 - 13:00	Introductory remarks on the nature and scope of the contributions of agencies to the preparatory process for the Conference: (a) during the preparatory process, (b) at the Conference
14:30 - 16:30	Exchange of views on the nature and scope of contributions by agencies: selected themes, substantive thematic papers and participation in parallel events at the Conference, timetable for the submission of inputs by the agencies for the preparatory process and for the Conference
16:30 - 17:30	Finalization of the draft report of the Meeting
17:30 - 18:00	Consideration and adoption of the Report of the Meeting
18:00	Closure of Meeting

ANNEX *II*

List of documents

1. Draft agenda

2. Briefing note on the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

3. Note on contributions by organizations and agencies to the preparatory process for the Conference

4. Least Developed Countries 1999 Report

5. Statistical Synopsis of the Least Developed Countries 1999

6. Note verbale

ANNEX III

Attendance

1. The following State was represented at the Meeting:

Sweden

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the Meeting:

European Community
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

3. The following specialized agencies and related organization were represented at the Meeting:

International Labour Organisation
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Health Organization
World Bank
International Monetary Fund
Universal Postal Union
International Telecommunication Union
World Meteorological Organization
World Intellectual Property Organization
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
International Atomic Energy Agency
World Food Programme
World Trade Organization

4. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries were represented at the Meeting. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO was also represented at the Meeting. The Non-Governmental Liaison Service was represented at the Meeting.